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# Letters to the Editor

## Tests Beyond Detection

On the nuclear test ban issue you gave a generous 27 column inches to James Newman's rambling emotional outburst in defense of Deputy Disarmament Administrator Adrian S. Fisher and against Senator Dodd and myself.

At this writing you have given not even a fraction of an inch to startling factual testimony to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy by Maj. Gen. A. W. Betts, the AEC's Director of Military Applications. Betts revealed the big hole, even in the Administration's upcoming new treaty draft, through which the Soviets can drive clandestinely to nuclear weapons superiority.

Let Mr. Newman, your editorialists and reporters quibble if they must over effectiveness of "identification," "location" and "on-site inspection" of "detectable" events which might be nuclear tests.

But why not also let your readers in on the fact there exists a very vital low yield range of cheat testing—single shots or an entire series—which cannot be detected at all?

There are shots below "a three kiloton yield equivalent in alluvium" regarding which Dr. Frank Press told the U. S. AEC, March 7, detection capability is "very close to zero."

This is a testing range in which the Administration proposes to forgo wholly any and all U. S. developments and, as a practical matter, simply let the Soviets to keep their word not to carry on undetectable tests to develop secretly nuclear weapons of vast military significance.

These are the significant weapons General Betts authoritatively declared could be clandestinely tested and secretly developed in this undetectable area freely open to surreptitious activity.

Relatively low yield weapons of this tactical type.

Extrapolation from events as small as one kiloton up to much higher yield battlefield tactical weapons with such confidence as not to require

difficulties.

large yield strategic weapons of interest, by the simple expedient of testing in underground cavities which muffle explosions down below the three kiloton yield equivalent for seismic nondetection purposes.

General Betts added, as an indication of what kind of weapons development is of interest, that about 50 per cent of actual U. S. underground testing in Nevada is precisely in the low, undetectable kiloton range.

Only last Wednesday President Kennedy told the Nation, "we would not accept a test ban which did not give us every insurance that we could detect a series of tests underground." Yet the upcoming treaty draft being prepared by Adrian Fisher and others proposes to do exactly that. The incontrovertible result is a gap of inconsistency between the Administration's words and deeds.

It is little wonder that Americans observing the Administration's test ban disarray, including Senator Dodd and myself, are deeply concerned with its incredible inability to match oratory with action.

This is particularly true when President Kennedy's words of March 2, 1962, are recalled announcing resumption of U. S. nuclear tests at that time. These included the following:

"A nation which is refraining from tests obviously cannot match the gains of a nation conducting tests."

"We know enough now about broken negotiations, secret preparations and the advantages gained from a long test series never to offer again an uninspected moratorium."

Those who may, somehow, become aware of General Betts's testimony, may feel as I do about the President's words of a year ago. Namely, they hardly can be erased by the unabashed conclusions of such practitioners of "nuclear gapmanship" as Messrs. Fisher, Newman, et al, that cheat testing in the "big hole" for surreptitious nuclear development really doesn't matter at all.

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